

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BANGKO 26744 250501Z

65

ACTION EA-09

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3843

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 26744

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR, TH

SUBJ: TNPD HELICOPTERS

REF: STATE 230381

SUMMARY. MISSION HAS MOVED FORWARD TO IMPLEMENT INSTRUCTIONS IN REFTEL. PROAG OF 1974 WAS AMENDED, AS INSTRUCTED, ON SEPT. 23. AIDE MEMOIRE PREPARED AND SCHEDULED FOR DELIVERY TO OFFICE OF PRIME MINISTER, BUT APPOINTMENT POSTPONED TO SEPTEMBER 27 DUE TO CURRENT CABINET CRISIS. WE WILL SEEK TO DELIVER AIDE MEMOIRE AS SOON AS FEASIBLE. TEXT OF AMENDMENT TO PROAG AND OF AID MEMOIRE APPEAR BELOW. ACTION REQUESTED: THAT DEPARTMENT UNDERTAKE NECESSARY ACTION TO BEGIN SHIPMENT OF FIVE ADDITIONAL HELICOPTERS FOR ANTI-NARCOTICS USE IN THAILAND. END SUMMARY.

1. MISSION HAS MOVED FORWARD TO IMPLEMENT INSTRUCTIONS IN REFTEL. AS REQUESTED IN PARA 3 OF REFTEL, FIRST PARA IN SECTION IV OF PROAG OF 1974 WAS DELETED AND REPLACED BY FOLLOWING AMENDED PARA, SIGNED BY USOM AND BY DTEC ON BEHALF OF RTG ON SEPTEMBER 23: "UPON ARRIVAL IN THAILAND THE FIVE HELICOPTERS BEING PROVIDED UNDER THIS AGREEMENT SHALL BE BASED AND OPERATED GENERALLY IN TRAFFICKING AFFECTED AREAS IN NORTHWESTERN THAILAND (SPECIFICALLY, THE PROVINCES OF MAE HONG SON, CHIANG MAI, CHIANG RAI, LAMPANG, AND LAMPHUN), WITH USE IN OTHER AREAS SUBJECT TO MUTUAL USG-RTG APPROVAL. FURTHER, THE RTG AGREES TO

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BANGKO 26744 250501Z

UNDERTAKE THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS UPON SIGNATURE OF THIS PROJECT

AGREEMENT."

2. CHARGE HAS INFORMED NITHIPAT CHALICHAN, SECRETARY GENERAL OF OFFICE OF PRIME MINISTER, OF USG DECISION TO DELIVER FIVE ADDITIONAL HELICOPTERS TO TNPD FOR ANTI-NARCOTICS USE. NITHIPAT SUGGESTED THAT AIDE MEMOIRE MENTIONED IN REFTEL MIGHT SUITABLY BE DELIVERED TO HIM, AS HE IS SECRETARY OF COORDINATING COMMITTEE IN PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE FOR ANTI-NARCOTICS PROGRAMS. AIDE MEMOIRE (TEXT BELOW) WAS PREPARED AND APPOINTMENT MADE FOR CHARGE TO DELIVER IT TO NITHIPAT ON SEPTEMBER 23. THIS APPOINTMENT WAS CANCELED WHEN PRIME MINISTER RESIGNED, AND TENTATIVE APPOINTMENT FOR SEPTEMBER 24 SIMILARLY CANCELLED, AS NITHIPAT IS DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN THE CONSULTATIONS ASSOCIATED WITH FORMATION OF NEW CABINET. BUT IN CANCELLING TODAY'S APPOINTMENT, HIS OFFICE INDICATED THAT APPOINTMENT SEPTEMBER 27 WOULD IN ALL LIKELIHOOD BE KEPT. THERE IS CONSIDERABLE VALUE, IN OUR VIEW, IN DELIVERING AIDE MEMOIRE TO NITHIPAT, AS HE IS LIKELY TO CONTINUE IN KEY POSITION AS SECRETARY GENERAL IN OFFICE OF PRIME MINISTER. WE WILL INFORM DEPARTMENT AS SOON AS AIDE MEMOIRE HAS BEEN DELIVERED.

3. BEGIN TEXT OF AIDE MEMOIRE.

SUBJECT: DELIVERY OF FIVE ADDITIONAL HELICOPTERS TO THE THAI NATIONAL POLICE DEPARTMENT FOR ANTI-NARCOTICS USE.

THE EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES IS INFORMED THAT, AFTER CAREFUL CONSIDERATION OF THE CONCLUSIONS OF THE JOINT THAI-U.S. HELICOPTER UTILIZATION REPORT, DATED JULY 22, 1976 (COPY ATTACHED), THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT HAS DECIDED TO DELIVER FIVE ADDITIONAL HELICOPTERS FOR ANTI-NARCOTICS USE BY THE THAI NATIONAL POLICE DEPARTMENT. DELIVERY OF THE FIVE HELICOPTERS WAS COVERED IN THE PROJECT AGREEMENT SIGNED BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES OPERATIONS MISSION (USOM) AND THE DEPARTMENT OF TECHNICAL AND ECONOMIC COOPERATION (DTEC) ON MAY 20, 1974. (THE TEXT OF THE PROJECT AGREEMENT MAY BE FOUND AT ANNEX 3 OF THE ATTACHED HELICOPTER UTILIZATION REPORT.)

THE PROJECT AGREEMENT OF 1974 CONTEMPLATED THE USE OF THE HELICOPTERS BY THE THAI POLICE AGAINST NARCOTICS CARRYING
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BANGKO 26744 250501Z

CARAVANS, PROCESSING LABORATORIES, STORAGE SITES, AND OTHER PHYSICAL TARGETS. IT WAS ANTICIPATED THAT THE FIRST TWO HELICOPTERS PROVIDED TO THE ROYAL THAI GOVERNMENT BY THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT FOR ANTI-NARCOTICS USE IN 1974 WOULD BE ASSIGNED TO THE SPECIAL NARCOTICS ORGANIZATION (SNO) AND THE BORDER PATROL POLICE (BPP) IN THE NORTHERN THAILAND AREA, THE REGION CLOSE TO THE OPIUM FIELDS.

TO ELIMINATE THE POSSIBILITY OF MISUNDERSTANDING REGARDING THE EMPLOYMENT OF THE FIVE ADDITIONAL HELICOPTERS, THE UNITED GOVERNMENT WISHES TO AMEND THE 1974 PROJECT AGREEMENT TO PROVIDE THAT THESE HELICOPTERS WILL BE BASED AND OPERATED GENERALLY IN NORTHWESTERN THAILAND (SPECIFICALLY, THE PROVINCES OF MAE HONG SON, CHIANG MAI, CHIANG RAI, LAMPANG, AND LAMPHUN), WITH USE IN OTHER AREAS SUBJECT TO MUTUAL AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE ROYAL THAI GOVERNMENT AND THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT. USOM HAS MADE THE NECESSARY CONTACTS WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF TECHNICAL AND ECONOMIC COOPERATION FOR THIS PURPOSE, AND THE 1974 PROJECT AGREEMENT WAS AMENDED ON SEPTEMBER 23 TO REFLECT THE ABOVE ADJUSTMENT IN THE OPERATING AREA FOR THE HELICOPTERS.

IT IS THE FURTHER UNDERSTANDING OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT THAT THE FIVE ADDITIONAL HELICOPTERS ARE BEING FURNISHED ONLY TO FACILITATE CONTROLS ON ILLICIT PRODUCTION, PROCESSING, TRANSPORTATION AND DISTRIBUTION OF NARCOTICS DRUGS. IT IS HOPED THAT THE THAI NATIONAL POLICE DEPARTMENT WILL INCREASE THE RATE OF HELICOPTER UTILIZATION FOR ANTI-NARCOTICS ENFORCEMENT OPERATIONS, RELATIVE TO NON-ENFORCEMENT USE. THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT RECALLS THAT AS A PART OF THE CONTINUING ANTI-NARCOTICS EFFORT OF THE ROYAL THAI GOVERNMENT, THE ROYAL THAI GOVERNMENT COMMITTED ITSELF TO FIELD AT LEAST 55 BORDER PATROL POLICE ANTI-NARCOTICS TEAMS IN THE PROJECT AGREEMENT OF 1974 REFERRED TO ABOVE (SECTION IV-1). END TEXT OF AID MEMOIRE.

4. ACTION REQUESTED: THAT DEPARTMENT UNDERTAKE NECESSARY ACTION TO BEGIN SHIPMENT OF FIVE ADDITIONAL HELICOPTERS FOR ANTI-NARCOTICS USE IN THAILAND.
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